

THE HEIGHTS CHARTER
(A California Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation)

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 21, 2024
REGULAR BOARD MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Kellie Peel called the regular meeting of the governing board to order at 4:18 pm. This Board Meeting was held at 2710 Alpine Blvd, Suite E, in Alpine.

DIRECTORS PRESENT

The following members were present at the meeting: Kellie Peel, Kristi Scherbaum, Casey Larsen, Angie Sandkuhl, Cassie Andrews, Debra Cramsie. Absent: Jenna Andrus.

FLAG SALUTE

PRESENTATIONS – No presentations this month.

COMMUNICATIONS (non-agenda items)

Oral Communications – No oral communications at this meeting.

Director's Report –

- Enrollment Update. 282 students are currently attending The Heights Charter.
- Personnel. 1) The 2nd Grade teacher resigned as of October 18, 2024. The 2nd Grade teaching position is posted on EdJoin.
- Upcoming Events: 1) Little Caesar Pizza fundraiser will be held October 15 through October 17, 2024. 2) Hike-a-thon and our Annual All-School Picnic is scheduled for November 13, 2024 at Pine Valley Park. It was moved from the spring to fall this year per parents' requests. 3) The Parent Association meeting will be on November 14, 2024 at 6 pm.
- Cell Phone Usage Policy. Governor Newsom signed The Phone-Free School Act (Assembly Bill 3216) on September 23, 2024, which will require every school district, charter school, and county office of education to develop a policy limiting or prohibiting the use of student smartphones by July 1, 2026. *"Reducing phone use in schools is essential for minimizing digital distractions and making space for stronger and more meaningful in-person connections. AB 3216 isn't only about classroom instruction, it's about protecting the mental health and social and emotional well-being of California's kids."*
- Update on Connectivity Progress. Dominick Avera provided a written update: *"We are nearing the completion of our network project. Everything is now in place and we are preparing to transition on October 31, 2024. After we verify that everything is running smoothly, we will begin removing the old network. This will decrease monthly spending significantly."*
- Coordination with Viejas Tribal Tutoring Center. The Heights has 5 students who go to the Viejas Tribal Tutoring Center. Diana Whyte had a positive meeting with the tutoring center staff.
- Health Benefits for Salaried Employees Update. Due to cost increases in health care every year, The Heights is looking for a solution and/or find ways to lower the cost.
- Other – 1) Diana Whyte attends the monthly Dehesa Board meetings as often as possible. Dehesa's support of The Heights Charter is much appreciated. 2) Simple Texting SMS service for school emergency use is being looked into. This service would allow a way to easily send messages or alerts to large groups at the same time. A contract will be brought to the next Board meeting.

CONSENT ITEMS:

1. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the September 16, 2024 Regular Board Meeting were approved as presented.

DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ITEMS:

1. For Information Only: Budget vs Actuals as of 9/30/24. The Heights Charter continues to maintain a positive budget. There was one large purchase made that was not budgeted for - the copy machine broke down and had to be replaced this month. No action required on this item.

Public Comments. There were no public comments made on this item.

2. For Information Only: Final Report from Oversight Committee. Diana Whyte read a section from the final report on the Identified Strengths of The Heights which were very positive. There were two Areas for Improvement to resolve, including the playground safety issue which was self-identified and addressing how to achieve a more balanced diversity of the school demographics. No action required on this item.

Public Comments. There were no public comments made on this item.

3. Reviewed/Approved: Diversity Plan Update. Diana Whyte shared the changes to the current diversity plan which will include annual in-person contact of the Viejas Education Center and annual in-person contact with local preschools within a 5-mile radius of The Heights Charter School. We have chosen this approach because the majority of available openings are in TK each year. After review, Cassie Andrews made a motion to approve the Diversity Plan updates as presented. Casey Larsen seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0. Ayes: Peel, Scherbaum, Larsen, Sandkuhl, Andrews, Cramsie. Noes: 0. Absent: Andrus.

Public Comments. There were no public comments made on this item.

4. Reviewed/Adopted: Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination, and Bullying Policy. This policy is an update from the attorneys and will replace the previously adopted Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination, and Bullying Policy. All current laws have been incorporated into this update. Casey Larsen made a motion to adopt the Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination, and Bullying Policy as presented. Angie Sandkuhl seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0. Ayes: Peel, Scherbaum, Larsen, Sandkuhl, Andrews, Cramsie. Noes: 0. Absent: Andrus.

Public Comments. There were no public comments made on this item.

5. Reviewed/Adopted: Annual Review of Board Policy 5030 Student Wellness. The policy was reviewed as required. Additionally, the word 'district' has been replaced with 'school'.

The key wording in the policy that requires the annual review is in italics under **Advertising and Promotion**:

"The Governing Board establishes this policy to ensure effective and consistent standards for advertisements and promotions by non-school groups in school-sponsored publications, on the school web site and social media, and on school facilities and grounds. The Executive Director or designee shall not accept for distribution, or allow on school property, any materials or advertisements that:

Promote during the school day any food or beverage that does not comply with state nutritional standards pursuant to Education Code 49430-49431, including a corporate incentive program that offers free or discounted foods or beverages that do not meet nutritional standards as rewards for students who reach certain academic goals. This prohibition does not include advertising on clothing with brand images worn on school grounds, advertising contained in product packaging, or advertising of infrequent school fundraising events involving food or beverages that do not meet the nutritional standards. (Education Code 49431.9, per AB 841) (cf. 3550 – Food Service/Child Nutrition Program; cf. 5030 – Student Wellness)"

Casey Larsen made a motion to adopt Board Policy 5030 Student Wellness, as presented. Angie Sandkuhl seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0. Ayes: Peel, Scherbaum, Larsen, Sandkuhl, Andrews, Cramsie. Noes: 0. Absent: Andrus.

Public Comments. There were no public comments made on this item.

6. Reviewed/Approved: Update to Dress Code Policy. The updated policy is more detailed and specific than the previous policy. A lengthy discussion was held and it is possible that this item may be revisited in the future. Upon approval, this dress code update will be added to the Parent/Student Handbook. Cassie Andrews made a motion to approve the update to the Dress Code Policy. Casey Larsen seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0. Ayes: Peel, Scherbaum, Larsen, Sandkuhl, Andrews, Cramsie. Noes: 0. Absent: Andrus.

Public Comments. There were no public comments made on this item.

7. Reviewed/Approved: Update to 2024-2025 Parent/Student Handbook. The previously approved Parent/Student Handbook has been reviewed by the attorneys. This update includes many new legally required notifications, especially the updated Title IX Policy to conform with recent legislation. After review, Angie Sandkuhl made a motion to approve the update to the 2024-2025 Parent/Student Handbook, as presented. Cassie Andrews seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0. Ayes: Peel, Scherbaum, Larsen, Sandkuhl, Andrews, Cramsie. Noes: 0. Absent: Andrus.

Public Comments. There were no public comments made on this item.

8. For Information Only: Annual Brown Act Training. Details of the training will be sent to the Board next week. No action required on this item.

Public Comments. There were no public comments made on this item.

ADJOURNMENT

The open session of this Board meeting was adjourned at 5:44 pm.

CLOSED SESSION

Convened to closed session at 5:45 pm for the following item:

PERSONNEL MATTERS: The Governing Board will recess to Closed Session to consider personnel matters pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b)(1):

1. Appointment, Employment, Evaluation of Performance, Discipline of a Public Employee, Public Employee Dismissal/Release.

The Board was informed of the circumstances leading to a certificated staff member's recent resignation.

ADJOURNMENT

The closed session of this Board meeting was adjourned at 6:06 pm.

The next board meeting will be held at 4:15 pm on Monday, November 18, 2024.

I certify that I am the duly elected Secretary of The Heights Charter and that these minutes, consisting of three (3) pages, are the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors on October 21, 2024.

Debra Cramsie
Secretary